

Message Text

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ACTION SCS-03

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-06 ISO-00 SCA-01 H-01 L-02 SY-04

SCCT-01 USSS-00 CIAE-00 INR-05 NSAE-00 RSC-01 EB-07

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R 191650Z DEC 74

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1941

INFO AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 15191

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: CASC (KESTELOOT, ANDRE)

SUBJECT: W/W: ANDRE KESTELOOK, BELGIAN NATIONAL

REF: BEIRUT 15122

1. A REPRESENTATIVE OF KESTELOOT'S COMPANY, HARRY MCGRATH, HAS ARRIVED IN BEIRUT IN CONNECTION WITH KESTELOOT'S DISAPPEARANCE. HE AND MRS. KESTELOOT CALLED ON AMBASSADOR THIS MORNING TO DISCUSS CASE AND REQUEST THIS EMBASSY'S INTERVENTION WITH GOL.

2. MRS. KESTELOOT REPORTED DETAILED CONVERSATIONS WITH COLONEL DAHDAH OF LEBANESE SURETE GENERAL. COL DAHDAH HAS INFORMED HER THAT IT IS POSSIBLE THAT KESTLELOOT IS IN CUSTODY OF SAIQA (PALESTINIAN FACTION ASSOCIATED WITH SYRIA) AND MAY HAVE BEEN TAKEN TO DAMASCUS. DAHDAH TOLD HER HE INTENDED TO PURSUE HIS CONTACTS, BOTH IN LEBANON AND SYRIA, IN ATTEMPT CONFIRM KESTELOOT'S WHEREABOUTS.

3. AMBASSADOR EXPRESSED EMBASSY'S WILLINGNESS ASSIST IN ANY WAY POSSIBLE BUT CAUTIONED THAT ANY ACTION TAKEN MIGHT BE COUNTERPRODUCTIVE IN VIEW LESS THAN CORDIAL US/PLO RELATIONS. AMBASSADOR STRESSED HE WISHED TO DO NOTHING WITHOUT FIRST COORDINATING WITH BELGIAN AMBASSADOR.

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4. AMBASSADOR THEN CALLED BELGIAN AMBASSADOR. HE EXPLAINED REASONS FOR OUR INTEREST, OUR CONCERN THAT OUR ACTIONS MIGHT BE COUNTERPRODUCTIVE AND OUR DESIRE NOT TO TAKE ANY STEP THAT WOULD CONFLICT WITH BELGIAN EFFORTS. BELGIAN AMBASSADOR OBVIOUSLY PERSONALLY AND DEEPLY INTERESTED IN KESTELOOT AND HANDLING CASE HIMSELF. HE HAS CONFERRED WITH POLICE, WITH COL DAHDAH AND HAS OBTAINED PROMISE OF ASSISTANCE OF ALGERIAN AMBASSADOR WHO HAS CLOSE PALESTINIAN CONTACTS. HE HAS ALSO SENT A STRONGLY-WORDED NOTE TO MINISTRY FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND HAS REPORTED FULLY TO BRUSSELS.

5. BELGIAN AMBASSADOR BELIEVES, AND WE CONCUR, THAT ANYTHING OTHER THAN ROUTINE EXPRESSION OF AMERICAN INTEREST IN CASE INADVISABLE UNTIL MORE IS KNOWN REGARDING IDENTITY OF GROUP HOLDING KESTELOOT. IT WAS AGREED, HOWEVER, THAT THIS EMBASSY SHOULD SEND ROUTINE NOTE TO MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, NOTING THAT KESTELOOT REPRESENTS AMERICAN COMPANY, AND EXPRESSING OUR INTEREST IN HIS WELFARE. NOTE WILL BE DELIVERED MINISTRY TOMORROW MORNING.

6. MCGRATH INFORMED US HIS FIRM WILLING POST SUBSTANTIAL REWARD, BUT AGREES WITH EMBASSY THAT THIS STEP, OR ANY OTHER REACTION IDENTIFYING KESTELOOT FURTHER WITH AMERICAN INTERESTS SHOULD BE STRICTLY AVOIDED UNTIL MORE IS KNOWN.

7. AMBASSADOR ALSO PLANS DISCUSS MATTER WITH KESTELOOT'S ATTORNEY FUAD NAAFA, FORMER FOREIGN MINISTER, AS SOON AS LATTER CAN BE LOCATED.

8. FURTHER DEVELOPMENTS WILL BE REPORTED AS THEY OCCUR.

9. FOR DAMASCUS: PREVIOUS CABLES BEING REPEATED TO YOU. BELIEVE NO REPEAT NO ACTION CALLED FOR ON YOUR PART AT THIS TIME.
GODLEY

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